

“Taarab” may simply be defined as a popular form of Swahili music that combines the singing of poetry with the accompaniment of instruments. This paper takes its focal point from the view advanced by Obiechina that it is no longer possible to undertake a meaningful criticism of African literature in indigenous or foreign languages without making serious reference to its traditional oral constituents at the levels of composition as well as content (Obiechina 1993:124). This is a necessary step because African literary and oral forms such as the Swahili taarab are becoming increasingly complex through their incorporation of old/new, traditional/modern, oral/written and indigenous /foreign configurations. Therefore, this discussion explores some of these aspects of modern taarab by looking at these factors surrounding the music form through the perspective of this theory of change.